



The Role of Village Entrepreneurs and Wholesalers in the Sweet Potato Value Chain in the Highlands of Papua New Guinea

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Abstract

Sweet potato (*kaukau*) is a major staple food crop in Papua New Guinea (PNG) that accounts for many households' food intake. The demand for *kaukau* has increased significantly over the years due to increasing urbanization in the country. Lae and Port Moresby, two of the major cities in PNG, get more *kaukau* produced in the Highlands because of the increased demand for it. To get a clear picture of the markets, key informants of the sweet potato supply chain were interviewed, including farmers, village entrepreneurs (VE), wholesalers, transporters, and buyers. This report focuses on the VEs and wholesalers operating in the main production areas in Western Highlands (WH) and Eastern Highlands (EH) provinces. Given the small number of VEs and wholesalers operating in high-production areas, all were interviewed, 3 VEs and 1 wholesaler in Hagen Central district in the WH, and 2 VEs and 1 wholesaler in the Daulo district in the EH provinces. Results show that VEs who buy *kaukau* and other vegetables from their own village faced problems in access to credit, transport, and storage facility, and many more, while wholesalers were much better resourced, had ready markets, and faced less problems. The constraints have resulted in fewer VEs coming on the scene. To address these issues, the government should put in place decisive policies to address these constraints and stimulate the growth of this industry. The government should also focus on building marketing infrastructure as well as adequately funding state agencies responsible for developing the fresh produce industry.